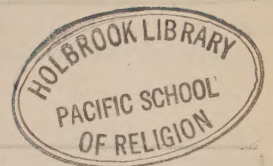




# The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● AUGUST 1977



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# Independence Day 1977



The feast of the thirtieth anniversary of the Indian Independence will be celebrated with much joy and thanksgiving. To many thousands who have suffered during the dark days of the Emergency, a new era of freedom has dawned. This particular Independence Day will not only remind everyone of his precious heritage, but also will be a warning not to take it for granted. The thirty year rule of the Congress party has been broken and for the first time a new party has come into power.

'Janata' is the new word which one hears every day and is bandied about on all occasions. However, we have known rather too well, in the days of the Emergency, of the unending words and slogans which confronted us everywhere. 'Janata' is a symbol which has a deep significance. It lays emphasis on the *people*. It affirms the importance of people who are the object as well as the subject of all plans and programmes. The elections once again gave them an opportunity to clearly and unequivocally communicate their message of freedom to the leaders of all the parties. The elected guardians of the people, whose party bears the very name 'Janata', have the tremendous responsibility of safeguarding the freedom of the people.

The past thirty years have taught us that political freedom for a vast number of Janata was almost an illusion, if not a mockery. It is stated that over 60 million are unemployed and 300 million under-employed. Sixty per cent of the whole population lives in poverty. Seventy per cent of the people are illiterate. A few hundred thousands of villages still do not have even drinking water facilities. People in such circumstances have participated in the elections and have given a new mandate to the new ruling party. These are the people who are expected to celebrate Independence Day. What will the day of Independence mean to them?

The Prime Minister has emphasised that he would like to provide employment to all in 10 years time, to remove untouchability in five years (equal status for Harijans) and to introduce total prohibition of liquor in the country within four years. Although these and other goals towards the welfare of the masses are laudable, yet the people have heard many a promise before. They cannot be fed on words for too long. There are tremendous challenges and obstacles. Not only an enormous amount of money is needed but also a new sense of discipline and dedication. The new emphasis on the people should enable them to partici-

pate with the government in the various development projects. Unfortunately even now most of the facilities and privileges available to the people are not known to many. There is also a gap not only between the promises and the practices but between the rulers and the ruled. As the people have actively participated in the election and in the overthrowing of the government and have regained their freedom, they have to be alert to any injustice in the places where they live and fight for their rights. Their struggle will primarily be for the basic necessities of life. It is there that the people need to be helped by all those who proclaim their deep concern for the poor.

In all these, what is the role of those who profess the name of Jesus Christ? One trembles, if not hesitates, to speak about the Church as it has not only betrayed the people by its silence and indifference to all the sufferings during the Emergency, but also in a number of instances bowed down in praise to the powers that be. At least one lesson we hope the Church has learnt is not to talk loudly and pronounce its answers to all the problems but to be humble. It is necessary to put a stop to all the statements and the well-phrased resolutions. It is action however small that is needed. The challenge to the Church is not to seek more funds to give to the poor but to be with the poor and participate with them in their struggles. It is not charity that the people ultimately want, but justice. It is easy to be charitable. It is much more difficult and costly to seek along with the people justice that is due to them.

Independence Day is a day of remembrance. We recollect the past, particularly the immediate past. We remember with gratitude those whose passionate concern was freedom, those who gave their very lives for the freedom of others, those who faced untold sufferings and those who have patiently continued to wait for the basic amenities of life. We thank God for the many opportunities the Church had for witnessing. As we give thanks to God for the new era of freedom, we dedicate ourselves to preserve that freedom, promote unity among all people, and participate in the building of our nation so that there is justice and peace for all.



# Thirty Years of C.S.I.

The thirty year period of adjustments and consolidation in the life of the Church of South India is over. During the period the work of integration is not complete as there are dioceses where diocesan councils are not functioning due to civil court injunctions. It has so far been an inward-looking church. It has yet to make its impact on the life of the millions of non-Christians living in South India.

The commission on integration and joint action headed by the late Mr. R. D. Paul had the following terms of reference: 'To gather information on the conditions in each diocese, the problems, the opportunities, the degree of integration, the resources available in personnel and funds; to make an appraisal of the existing work and get a vision of new horizons; all in the context of the task of the church today.'

The commission did very good work and gave its report. The report was carefully studied and a follow-up was attempted for sometime.

A new commission has now been appointed to study the working of the Church in the last thirty years and to submit its report to the Synod of 1978. The country is rapidly changing. Old religions have taken a new life. Socialism and Communism are attracting millions of people. Secularism is taking root. Though the future is in the hands of God, the church has to face serious opposition and resistance to the Gospel. Unless the members of the church receive life in Christ, new power to witness and confidence to go ahead, there are dark days in store for the Church. The new commission has a responsible task and the future of the Church depends on its report and the follow-up.

It is necessary for the Commission and the Church to consider rectifying some organisational defects in the Church and to look forward and plan for the effective witnessing of the Church. As at present, an elected moderator in charge of a diocese, in addition to his work as moderator, can do very little except preside at the synod and committee meetings and represent the Church in foreign councils. At one time it was envisaged that a moderator without charge of a diocese would be able to do better work and direct the church more usefully. It is time now for such an appointment to be tried. The moderator and a committed person can visit all the dioceses periodically, help in solving problems and lay the basis for true and new witnessing. The dioceses are autonomous units with very little control by the Synod. There is need for a strong synod capable of planning and directing dioceses for effective witnessing.

The Bishops elected are mostly from the region of the diocese which needs a new bishop. Though they are bishops of the church, there are no general transfers. Except meeting other bishops and a few laymen in the synod and committee meetings, they have little knowledge of the church outside their diocese. The election of bishops is very elaborate. A special diocesan council

meeting is called for the purpose, spending large amounts of money and giving scope for schisms and enough time for canvassing. If they are to be bishops of the church, above influences and narrow loyalties, it is necessary that the present system of electing bishops be scrapped. Perhaps a panel of outstanding presbyters may be prepared by the synod. They must be exceptional people capable of spiritual guidance and good administration. Some norms may be laid down for preparing the list. Then, after a special training of two years, if a bishop is consecrated and posted to serve in any part of the church, then the church can be united and can serve its Lord more faithfully. Language may be made an excuse for such a procedure but it cannot be an impediment. When missionaries, who are not nationals and who have learnt an Indian language can serve as bishops, there cannot be an excuse for an Indian national to serve in any part of South India. To avoid undue influences and personal loyalties, it is necessary for a bishop to be transferred at least once in five years.

The selection, training and ordination of presbyters also have to be changed. When it is very difficult for an educated man to get a job to earn a living, the church becomes the last resort of the unemployed Christian. Influence and nepotism play a good part in the selection of candidates for the ministry. There is need to select the best candidates who have the aptitude, the ability and a divine call for the work. There is need also for the theological colleges to change their curriculum. There should be emphasis on adequate and guided practical training. In the subjects for study an Indian language other than the mother tongue of the candidate may be introduced.

There is considerable duplication of work at the diocesan level. A number of committees are appointed to look after different aspects of the work of the church. Each committee thinks only of its particular work without any co-ordination. Though the minutes of these committees are brought before the Executive Committee for approval, the minutes are many times misinterpreted and generally there is no follow up. Some of the members attend these committee meetings to mark attendance and to see to their personal work. Considerable amount of money and time will be saved by abolishing these committees. Instead, the Executive Committee of a diocese may be strengthened and a group of three or four members of the Executive Committee may be entrusted with a particular aspect of the work of the church. It will then be possible for the Executive Committee to have an over-all picture of the work and mission of the church and to allot priorities.

At present there is not much planning either at the synod or the diocesan level. If the church is to be an effective instrument in establishing the kingdom of God in a rapidly changing society, it is necessary for the church to plan and work out its course of action for successful witnessing and service. The officers of the synod and the diocese, with a few representatives of



the Executive Committee, may function as the planning commission at the Synod and the diocesan levels.

The greatest impediment in the spiritual growth of a pastorate is the pastorate committee. Instead of the pastorate committee election being a model to the secular world, all the evils of electioneering and elections are adopted in the election of members to the pastorate committee. Groupism is developed and fellowship is affected. Civil suits and injunctions follow. To avoid this, a more rational way of electing a pastorate committee has to be found and implemented.

If the Church of South India has to be a more effective instrument in God's work, if there is to be closer fellowship and fuller life within the church and if it is to be united in such a way that it will be a leaven of unity in the national life of India, the income and resources of the church have to be pooled, shared and used for the maintenance, development and witnessing of the whole church breaking down regional and language barriers. If you look at the statement of funds and properties held in trust by the Church of South India Trust Association, there are enough funds and sufficient property which, when developed, will yield enough finances for the fulfilment of all the needs of the church and to provide for new projects which the church might envisage. As it is, even a pastorate feels that there is no need for it to share its income with other pastorates in need and its contribution to the diocesan pool is often questioned. This narrow feeling will never make the church the family of Jesus Christ. The bold step to share all resources will help the church to grow in unity and be a model to the secular world.

Another revolutionary change, which is necessary for the church to grow fully, is the Missionary Societies withdrawing gracefully their missionaries and their aid to particular areas and projects. The Missionary Societies have done everything possible to establish the Church in India. Many of them have been true servants of God and have influenced the thinking of the great sons of the soil including Gandhi and Nehru. Their sacrificial life and service have established new phases, such as Missionary spirit and Missionary zeal with a fuller meaning in the life and growth of the country. But at the grass root levels of the Church there is more loyalty to the Missionary, and the Missionary Society than to our Lord, the Head of the Church. The contributions of the Missionary Societies to support their ex-areas and for projects in those areas perpetuate the divisive forces in the Church and the growth in unity and fellowship is affected. Also giving generously for the support of the Church and its activities by the members of the local congregations is greatly affected because the feeling persists that the Indian Church is fully supported by the foreign Missionary Societies.

Their withdrawal will also help the reorganisation of Institutional work. The institutional work of the Church, either in the educational field or in the medical field, is still bound by traditions and continued by grants from particular Missionary Societies. Educational Institutions, hospitals and dispensaries are continued in areas where there is no need for them because they are prestige institutions of the Missionary Societies and the local congregations are loyal to them. It is high time for the Indian Church to reorganise its institutional work for the effective witnessing of the Church in secular India. This will not mean complete severance of connections between the Missionary Societies and the Church of South India. Contacts can be maintained by exchange of workers for particular periods and two-way visiting fellowships. Contributions in money may be continued as donations to the whole church and not to any particular area or work. The church can then work out its own priorities, investigate and implement new fields of institutional work and allot funds where necessary.

The activities of the Church are mostly concentrated in urban and semi-urban areas. Many of the villages are still untouched. Eighty per cent of the population of India live in the villages. In spite of the many advances made in many areas of the country, changes are yet to be felt in rural India. Efforts are being made to build up agriculture and to make it a paying concern. Far reaching changes have been effected by abolishing bonded labour, eliminating the money lender, providing irrigation facilities, imposing ceiling on land, making the tiller the owner of the land. Agricultural economy is now to be carefully watched and worked up. In this context the church has to reorganise its activities in rural India. The church has so far touched only the fringes of rural India. Rural congregations are not given the importance and attention given to urban congregations. Many presbyters prefer to serve in urban areas. The representatives of the village congregations who attend the synod and the diocesan councils are not given the opportunity to express themselves in their own languages freely and fearlessly. As long as rural India is neglected by the church the Christian community will continue to be small and insignificant. All that the Church does in urban areas is duplication of service and the original impact the church has made is lost. The church has now to revalue itself and new methods of evangelism and service have to be worked out for the church to enter rural India on a large scale.

If changes are made in the life and work of the Church of South India, its constitution has also to be changed relevantly. The time is now ripe for the Church to stop looking inwards and to reach out for service and effective evangelism.

Bellary,

P. L. SAMUEL.



# Life Style

We as Christian youth in Asia reaffirm our commitment to all that Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour stood for—peace, love, justice, equality and freedom for everybody regardless of sex, race, age or creed.

In our countries in Asia this ultimate goal of the mission of God through Christ is not complete. The Asia Youth Mission has heard the hard evidence and the stories of inequality, injustices, disharmony and apathy throughout the region. The poor are locked into their poverty by the wealthy. Those who depend on the land to live are frustrated and oppressed by the owners of land. Racial and cultural minorities are dominated and suppressed by majority groups. Women occupy an inferior status. People are denied basic rights without legal redress.

Recognizing that we are called and commanded to join in God's mission of love to His world, we see our response expressed through a commitment to mould and change our own life-style to witness more clearly to the Christ life-style. Our commitment is also to examine, challenge and work for change in our churches, organisations and whole societies at those points where greed, avarice, misused power and oppression are at work.

The existing life-style prevalent in most nations of the region is characterised by a sharp division between a small rich elite and a poor majority. Even in Japan, New Zealand and Australia this division is becoming more obvious. On the other hand, the churches are generally wealthy middle-class institutions with strong connections with the ruling class. The point at which life-style becomes an issue is obviously very different for urban workers than it is for us—young, educated, middle-class church members. For them, it poses the question of fighting against economic deprivation. Conversely, for us it may pose the question of identification with the cause of minorities and the poor through the rejection of a wealthy consumer life-style which places things before people and prevents the possibility of a radical renewal of society.

There is sometimes a tension between the individual and the social dimensions of life-style. We must, for example, accept individual responsibility for our own life-styles, and this may involve self-denial. It is important to distinguish personal self-esteem from self-importance. Being what we are implies humility not arrogance. Individual actions are also important as powerful symbolic expressions and part of a strategy for change, e.g. searching out products for purchase that give the highest return to the workers who produce them; examining the implications of employment on the lives and freedom of other people; refusal to use one's vehicle for city transport and buying a bicycle instead.

Some would question whether it is meaningful to talk about life-style in individual terms. Such people regard as meaningless the emphasis on personal commitment to a new life-style. For them, this means we are accepting

that only the individual, and not society, can be changed. On the contrary, they want to stress social analysis and social transformation.

Ultimately, most of us see no conflict between these two approaches. Of course, there are dangers that we become introspective, thinking only of ourselves while ignoring social realities. And some may be busy working towards a change in social structures without reflecting that renewed society in their own lives. Society is made up of individuals-in-togetherness. Therefore, we consider our individual life-styles in relation to the life-styles of others and in relation to the rest of our society. And each of us is responsible to work for the transformation of society. When this happens, we see a more complete understanding and practice of life-style.

## The Need for Change:

On a global scale the world is grossly unbalanced. On the one hand, one-quarter of the world is consuming what three-quarters of the world produces. The helplessness of the poor world makes it look to the western powers which in turn creates a sense of dependence in them. Through long term aid giving the rich world is in a position to control and decide the destiny of poor nations. Given this situation, there is an urgent need for change. Our own life-styles need to reflect this urgency. In our discussions and sharing we realized this need and considered ways we as individuals could begin to reassess our own lives, e.g. the implications of our consumption patterns.

## Recommendations

1. We ask the CCA youth section to help form study groups of Christian young people to examine critically their own life-style to ensure that they conform with what Christ stood for—His life and His teachings with specific emphasis on the fullness of all people in God's love, and justice and service among all people, especially the poor and downtrodden.
2. We encourage the efforts of churches to adopt a more simple life-style; present the Gospel in the language of the people; reject large Church landholdings and elitist schools and hospitals; create a just and participatory power structure.
3. We ask the CCA to help the churches realize the need for a change of life-style to one which enables Christians to participate more fully in the struggle for human rights and other dimensions of social justice.
4. We encourage the forming of groups to:
  - (a) expose Christians to the political realities of their countries and to the need for active participation in political actions for social change.



(b) share possibilities of alternative life-styles in the Asian setting.

(c) train Christians for social and political action.

5. We recommend that the CCA:

(a) invite groups engaged in people's action and people's movements in all Asian nations to research and analyse the historical developments in their nations and the role of the churches vis-a-vis these historical developments.

(b) create conditions for exchange among the Asian countries of materials produced and personnel engaged in (a) above.

(c) initiate dialogue between Christian youth involved in developing alternative life-styles and those groups and movements for whom alternative life-styles is synonymous with and alternative society.

(Extracts from the report of the Asian Youth Mission on the theme *Christian Youth in Asian Suffering and Hope* held in Hong Kong from May 14th to 23rd, 1977).

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# World Conference of Religious Workers for Peace

The World Conference of Religious Workers for Lasting peace, Disarmament and Just Relations among Nations, held in Moscow on June 6-10, 1977, had more than 600 participants from 103 countries, representing all the major religions of the world, namely Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism and Sikhism. The Indian delegation was quite large, more than 30, representing Christians, Hindus, Moslems and Buddhists. Several international religious organisations such as the World Council of Churches, the Christian Peace Conference, the Lutheran World Federation, World Baptist Alliance, All Africa Conference of Churches, the Conference of European Churches, the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace were also represented.

It was at the time of the World Congress of Peace Forces, held in Moscow in 1973, that His Holiness Pimen, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, proposed a conference of all religions for Peace. The proposal received support not only from the Russian Orthodox Church but also from the Baptist and Lutheran Churches in Soviet Union and from other religious bodies, namely the Buddhists, Moslems and Jews. The World Conference was presided by Metropolitan Juvenaly but in the leadership of the Conference, there were representatives of different religions. All the sessions opened and closed with a period of silent prayer.

In his opening address, Metropolitan Juvenaly spoke of the lofty aspirations for peace which were behind the convening of this World Conference and the atmosphere of co-operation, enthusiasm and commitment for the common cause of peace with justice, which characterised the work of the International Preparatory committee. He also proposed that Christians should declare the remaining 23 years before the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ as years of peace, to be marked by labours for the strengthening of peace among nations.

The main theme address was given by a Muslim, Mufti Ziantdin Khan Ibu Ishan Babakhan of the Soviet Union. He stressed on the closeness of different religions to each other in their teaching on peace and

brotherhood and on the need for inter-religious co-operation in peace-making activities in the world. Interestingly enough, all the three papers on the sub-themes were presented by Christians, Canon Burgess Carr of Africa, on *Lasting Peace*, Canon Raymond Goor of Belgium on *Disarmament* and Metropolitan Mar Gregorios of India on *Just relations among Nations*. These sub-themes were discussed in separate Working Groups with leaderships representing different religions as well as regions. One whole morning session was devoted to what was described as 'Workshops', according to religions, for the consideration of specific tasks for different religions in following up and implementing the recommendations of the Conference. The reports of the Working Groups on the sub-themes and of the Workshops were presented in the plenary session. The Conference finally adopted two documents, one an appeal addressed to the religious communities of the world and the other an appeal addressed to the Governments of all countries of the world.

The Appeal to the Religious Communities, stressing the importance of co-operation in striving for peace with justice, said, 'Our religious beliefs did not keep us apart, for we found our ethical concerns similar, and in our concern for the welfare of the whole of humanity we have found our common ground'. It made a strong plea that religious leaders should actively promote public opinion in favour of disarmament and against all violations of human rights. The document also stressed on the growing importance of the role of non-Governmental organisations in 'influencing public opinion, counteracting false propaganda and in changing the policies of governments in the best interests of all people everywhere'.

The Appeal to Governments welcomed 'the international detente as a necessary condition for building a just and peaceful world', and called upon all nations 'to make detente extend to the whole world, to follow up political detente with military and economic detente and to ensure that detente is irreversible'. It appealed 'most humbly' to the Governments 'to take resolute



steps to reduce defence budgets, cut down the manufacture and sale of armaments and make sure that the resources and man-power so saved are put to positive and creative use for the welfare of humanity. War and preparation for war are inimical to the spiritual order; it destroys peoples' moral fibre'. The Appeal said, 'We are convinced that lasting peace requires just economic relations within and between nations. We regret that political decolonisation has not led to the economic independence of peoples and nations'. The Appeal deplored 'the neo-colonialist system of exploitation reinforced by unfair trade terms and world market economy system buttressed by the military industrial complex, and transnational corporations with immense and undue power to influence the destinies of nations in the interest of monopoly capital'.

The Workshop meeting of Christians stressed the importance of peace education in the Christian education programmes of the Churches. It was also affirmed that the prayer for the Coming of the Kingdom of God is meaningful only if it is closely linked with commitment to work for and live in expectation for a world where human community as well as nature is liberated from all forms of oppression, injustice and exploitation. It called upon the Churches in western non-socialist countries to take active steps to counter the malicious anti-communist propaganda carried on by the secular as well as the religious press. Equally firmly it called upon the socialist countries to recognise the humanising and radicalising role religion can play in society and to permit religious communities to play their legitimate roles in public life.

The hospitality offered by the Russian Orthodox Church, other Christian Churches and religious bodies to the participants was most generous. The meeting halls provided for the meetings did not permit meetings in small groups and this did mean certain limitations on the participation of members in discussions. But every one had complete freedom to express his or her views on the issues under debate. It was certainly remarkable that in spite of wide differences of religious and doctrinal convictions representatives of different religions were united in their common concern for a world in which the human community will live without war or fear of war and free from any kind of exploitation, oppression or aggression. The main contribution of the conference is a demonstration of the potentiality of religions to co-operate in the common quest of the human community for peace with justice as a prerequisite for universal human well-being. We owe a great debt of gratitude to the Russian Orthodox Church for planning and organising this World Conference of Religious Workers for Peace.

J. R. CHANDRAN.

## New Officers for World Alliance of YMCAs

The Seventh World Council of YMCAs, meeting in Buenos Aires 29 June to 6 July, elected Oberkirchenrat Walter Arnold (47) of Germany as new president of the World Alliance of YMCAs. At the same time Hector Caselli (52) of Uruguay was elected secretary general, succeeding Fredrik Franklin (64) who had served in this post for the past 15 years.

Mr. Arnold, chief counsellor to the Bishop of the Protestant Church of Wurttemberg on ecumenical questions and mission, was national general secretary of the German YMCA from 1964 to 1973 and a member of the World Alliance executive and president's committees from 1973. In his inauguration speech under the theme of the council 'Enlisted in Reconciliation' he challenged 604 delegates from 62 national YMCA movements to be centred in the Christian faith and to reach out for worldwide development and human rights, witnessing to a new life-style. Mr. Arnold succeeds K. M. Philip (65) of India, who had taken over the presidency in 1974 after the execution of Endalkachew Makonnen in Ethiopia.

The newly elected secretary general, Hector Caselli, will take up his responsibilities in October, 1977. After studies in Montevideo and New York, Mr Caselli joined the Latin American Confederation of YMCAs whose general secretary he has been since 1970. From 1965 to 1970 he worked as youth and student secretary of the World Alliance of YMCAs in Geneva, Switzerland. In a programme address he pledged to continue the work of the Alliance in the spirit of his predecessor and at the same time to intensify the international, ecumenical and inter-racial character of the YMCA movement.

—EPS



# The late Rev. V. T. KURIEN

## An obituary notice

In the death of Rev. V. T. Kurien the Church of South India has lost one of its most beloved 'Pastors'. During the last year of his life he was living in his home town Nallanikunnu. He died on the 25th June in the Holy Cross Hospital, Quilon where he had been removed for treatment. The funeral took place the same evening at Nallanikunnu. In Bangalore where he spent so many years of fruitful service, the news trickled through. I myself heard of it in a conversation with a friend whom I met casually. I was surprised to learn that even two days ago someone whom he knew well was taken by surprise when he heard the news. We as members of the Church cannot afford to forget him. The Church lives through history, gathering momentum through the persons who served it in their time. A historical sense is what binds the whole movement. Rev. V. T. Kurien has played an important role in that movement.

He served the Church in various capacities. But the image which comes uppermost to my mind as I think about him is that of the pastor. Strangely enough this office is no longer held in high esteem by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. That it should be so in secular life is not surprising. This is in accordance with the ethos of our faith. The best description of our Lord's Person and work in the New Testament is that of 'the great shepherd of the sheep'. It was for Peter the highest manifestation of his love for his Master. A true servant of the Master need not seek a greater role than this and there is no, greater than this. The Christian calling always meant this to Rev. V. T. Kurien and he kept this image ever before himself. Dressed in the garb of his office he was at all times conscious of his identity.

When we remember one who thought primarily of his role as a pastor in the Church, it is only right that we should set both the pastor and the Church in the right perspective. For a Christian the Church is the sphere of life. He sees everything else in relation to that sphere and he thinks and orders his life accordingly. We usually think of the church as a society or association organised on the lines of any other sacred or secular sect or group. To seek a definition of the church is a vain quest. There is none in the New Testament. Perhaps the word itself is an indication of its real nature. It means 'The Lord's own'. We are not sure of the shape of the church but there are metaphors which give us a sense of it. One fact emerges, that the Church is a fellowship between the Master and His disciples, and therefore among the disciples themselves it is a covenant. It is enshrined in the benediction with which we part at the end of every service of worship. The man who blesses us in the Lord's name is the pastor, one who is ordained to dispense this grace, and he must possess the Lord's spirit in good measure. How often have I received this blessing from our pastor and friend Rev. V. T. Kurien.

His entire life mediated this 'fellowship of the Spirit'. Starting his ministry as a Children's missionary and a parish priest, he later worked as a professor in more than one Theological College. He retired as the Principal of the United Theological Seminary of the Malayalam dioceses of the C.S.I. I remember specially the years we spent together at the United Theological College,

Bangalore. Though he was in some degree a reticent man, there was no doubt about his goodwill towards all.

He was never hasty in judgment, never carried away by the emotions of the moment. During the last years of his ministry we were together yet once more, though for all too short a while, at the Kannamoola seminary. The seminary was depleted of its staff and resources. With his usual zeal he set to work to reorganise the set-up and by the time he left he had raised the status of the institution and augmented its resources. It was uphill work and throughout this period the pastoral care of the students and their training to care for the congregations to which they return, became his primary concern.

A prime need of today is to restore the image of the pastor to the forefront of the life of the Indian church. There are many institutions unconnected with each other, in their 'colonial' setting, nothing more than replicas of institutions begun elsewhere, not only irrelevant to the life of the church in India but obscuring its place and function. They claim to be ecumenical and international, grandiose terms that really mean nothing. The only 'oikoumene' we know is one's neighbourhood where we get the call from the Lord to be the shepherd of His sheep. It was so with St. Peter and it was so with our pastor Rev. V. T. Kurien.

Let me close with some reflections on counselling which was Kurienachan's life-work. Some years ago a few of us approached an eminent Hindu psychologist for some talks on his subject. He demurred at first. 'You have no need to come to me, he said, you have your pastors. In their care of their congregations you will find the answers.' Though there are many failures in our pastoral ministry, a Hindu instinctively recognised the place and function of the pastor in society. A knowledge of psychology may be a valuable asset but I should hate to think that the work of our Lord 'the friend of publicans and sinners' could be reduced to a psychological technique. Rev. V. T. Kurien taught pastoral theology when he worked on the staff of theological colleges. Twice he travelled to other lands, once to Canada and once to Australia. He did not go there for so-called higher education but to serve as pastor and learn more of the problems of the ministry. This distilled knowledge has been preserved for us in the books he wrote for laymen and students. We have reason to be grateful to his memory for the man he was and the ideal he lived for, that of the beloved pastor.

A word about Mrs. V. T. Kurien. She was a type of the old-fashioned pastor's wife. She had no employment outside her home and therefore was a full-time partner in her husband's ministry. When I told a young friend about the death of Rev. V. T. Kurien he immediately remembered Mrs. Kurien. 'She cured me of jaundice by her home-grown herbal medicine' he said. It is by such acts of kindness that we are remembered. When I asked her if she was going to the Serampore Convocation to be held at Kottayam with her husband she quoted a Malayalam proverb that the fish must needs go wherever the stream of water ran. Theirs was an ideal family life, in which the sons grew up to bring great honour to their parents. Their crowning joy must have been the last trip to Kottayam to listen to their son Dr. C. T. Kurien deliver the convocation address at the graduation ceremony. Not only his children but all of us could rise up and call him blessed.

F. MULIYIL.



# *Life and Mission of Church of South India—Plea for Re-Appraisal and Renewal*

As I was thinking over what I should write the thought that came uppermost in my mind was the correspondence I had with the late Dr. Rajiah D. Paul in 1962 over the Questionnaire and replies in connection with the work of the Synod Commission appointed in September 1961. That was to survey, gather information, make appraisal of the Life and Mission of the Church of South India and to identify areas of greater 'Integration and Joint Action'. The late Dr. Rajiah D. Paul was not only a distinguished Civil servant but served the C.S.I. for nearly two decades with devotion as an organiser, able administrator, prolific writer, out spoken-challenging speaker and theologian. The work of the Commission of which he was the Chairman did a splendid job, not only to gather lot of information through its well ordered—objective—fairly comprehensive and searching questionnaire. It made a bold and honest appraisal of the Life, work and Mission of the C.S.I. and attempted to identify and recapture the vision of new horizons in the context of conditions obtaining at that time. Readers will recall that wonderful and challenging Volume *Renewal and Advance* published in 1963.

I would like to make a plea for study and reappraisal to be done in a spirit of prayer and honest heart-searching. Readers of that Volume and other documents of similar appraisals done from time to time will recall the areas of study and evaluation.

My purpose is only to initiate some sort of study on all aspects of Life, Witness and Service in our Pastorates, Groups—Diocesan and Synod levels, Inner life worship, witness, new areas and challenges and opportunities. How well and truly the church has kept the Faith—promises and hopes. Integration, development and judicious use of resources are all some issues.

The basic problem is whether the Church is awake to the cry of the times to be involved in the task at grass-root levels, whether the church is with the poor oppressed, and neglected—in the service of the masses making them sensitive and as a community involved in the tasks of freedom, social justice, development, whether the C.S.I. has discovered her call to be with 'The Crucified Christ'. The challenge is for discovering a more meaningful identity and fuller participation.

It is my prayer that, the Holy Spirit should lead us all to real obedience so that we could be brought closer together, bind ourselves together and together seek a more meaningful life and attempt a more effective witness and service in our country and outside.

On September 27th 1977 we would be completing thirty years of Life and Work together. At that time

(thirty years ago) we said to ourselves 'The C.S.I. seeks the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace. But this unity of the spirit most find expression in the Faith and order of the church, its worship; in its organisation and in its whole life! so that as the Body of Christ, it may be a fit instrument for carrying out His gracious purposes in the world' (constitution page 2). We are completing the thirty year period 'granted for the development of full unity in Ministry and Life within the United Church' (Page 17 Section 21).

The Church was meant to be a dynamic instrument, a movement of the people, for the people and to be carried by all the people in unity, understanding and love. It was to be a movement meant to be different from the traditional forms and structures. It started as a union, joined together of people who wanted to be God's movement, led by the Holy Spirit.

But now whither have we drifted and drifting? Is it not a crucial question to ask? Are we attempting to be one with the crucified and risen and glorified Lord and therefore one with each other serving one another and others. Or are we introverts, static, residing in forbidding castles and in rigid urban oriented structures. Keeping the spirit of God out? The strength and stability of our church has never been more urgently called for than in India today.

My prayer is that the Holy Spirit which helped to bring people together at Tranquebar and subsequently in all the deliberations and working should continue to be amidst us to guide, control, convict and lead us to more meaningful witness and service at all levels.

'The test of every scheme of re-union is that it should help to gather up and express in one visible fellowship the full riches of the inheritance of the Church in all ages, that all who bear Christ's name may be "Strong to apprehend, with all the Saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth" of the Truth as it is in Jesus.' But this comprehensiveness will be achieved not as we seek it for its own sake, but as we return to the Central simplicity of the Gospel and learn 'to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge'.

'Our deepest need is not synthesis but repentance. It is as we learn to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified and to have no ground of gloryfying save His cross, that the broken and distorted pattern of His divine life, in us will be visibly restored, and we shall be 'filled unto all the fulness of God'' (Ephesian 3: 18-19) (Leslie Newbigin).

SAMSON RAMAKRISHNIAH.

[AUGUST 1977]



# Message and Communication

The CCA Assembly reaffirmed with the usual fervour and enthusiasm that Mission and Evangelism was, and is, the foremost task of the churches and decided to separate the communications desk of the CCA from this particular concern so it could effectively serve all three Programme concerns equally.

'There is need for viable theological reflection and meaningful action informed by biblical insights, rooted in our history, grounded in the contemporary Asian reality of suffering and looking forward with hope in Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Thus the delegates began their directive for the 'message' and its 'communication' for the next quadrennium of the churches in Asia.

Formation of the Programme initiatives to be implemented fell into three concerns: Mission and Evangelism, Dialogue, and Unity.

The affirmation of the message was unanimous and clear with the pledge to 'take the call for mission and evangelism in the present Asian situation seriously. There must be a conscious drive to proclaim the Gospel to those who have not responded to the offer of new life in Jesus Christ... (and) greater attention to shaping the content of the message in the actual context within which we work.'

The dominant reality of Asia was described as people being wasted by hunger, torture, deprivation of rights, economic exploitation, discrimination, and sexual oppression.

Proposals called for a consultation of evangelists which would have as its main format the sharing and learning from those within Asia who are actually involved in the work of evangelism, as well as case studies.

The CCA would help to provide the opportunity for evangelists to be trained with special concern for women and youth.

A commission on theological concerns would be set up to reflect upon the concerns of all three programme emphases.

News of evangelism would be featured in 'CCA News'; liturgies would be shared; and missionaries within the region; and opportunities of sharing mission personnel abroad explored.

As for dialogue with other faiths, the delegates declared that the reality in Asia is characterized by the dynamics of dialogue. It is the natural way of living in the communities where there are present other religions and ideologies. It is imperative, they said, that dialogue would become an integral part of the life of the churches, and CCA would promote it consciously.

The nature of dialogue, however, takes many forms—between two persons, different groups, communities—who adhere to different religious beliefs or ideologies or systems. And it takes place at all levels. There are also present in dialogue dimensions of encounter, mutual transformation and even one of critical relationship.

Priority would be given to dialogue in countries where there are serious misunderstandings and conflicts between Christian communities and others. They would also seek insights from other religions and ideologies that would enrich the life of the church and the Christian faith. In this way it would be possible to discover the Christian message for the Asian context.

It was not surprising that the intensity of interest centred around dialogue with liberal-capitalist and Marxist because, in Asia, situations exist where there is fierce division.

A review of the present situation of unity brought forth the reality that there are ambiguities within unions of churches which have not brought that sought-after unity. Statements of common faith have not always paved the way for church union. In some places, church union has collapsed for non-theological reasons; and in others it has not resulted in renewed understanding of the church.

Therefore, there is a need for new directions in union building. The primary reason for unity, it is said, is that unity is a sign of the unity of all peoples and of the purpose of God. This is still the imperative because of the wide diversities within the context of religions and cultures in Asia.

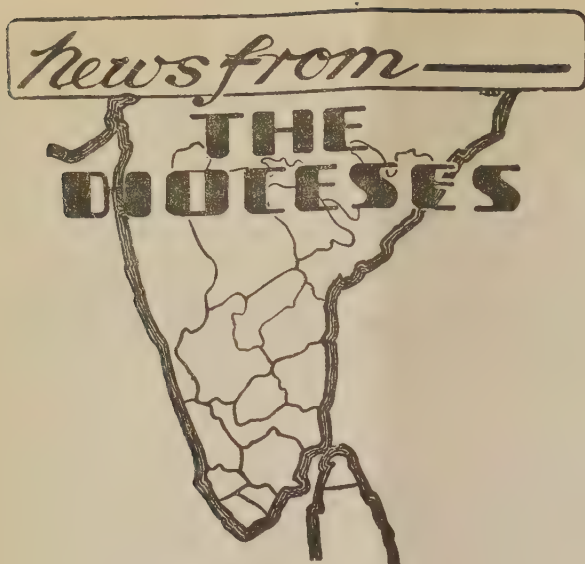
Gains have been made in unity in instances where a commonality of concern has been shared. Roman Catholic and Protestant churches have celebrated together, and Christians have also celebrated with persons of other faiths and found solidarity and unity in worship.

Attempts to explore and give priority to working out new perspectives was recommended, as well as to promote work camps for people of all faiths, and programmes which attempt to discover the ecumenical dimension in church life at the congregational level; and to draw Orthodox churches more fully into CCA.

It was evident that the Assembly continues to focus upon Evangelism and Mission in the context of the Asian situation of suffering to bring the hope of Jesus Christ into a central place within the concerns of the churches.

(The above report was accepted as the programme thrust for the next four years by the CCA Assembly held in Penang in June 1977.)





## RAYALASEEMA DIOCESE

### Youth Convention

We are extremely happy that the second Youth Conference of Rayalaseema Diocese was held in Nandyal from 2nd to 5th June in the S.P.G. High School campus. The Youth Conference was inaugurated by Rt. Rev. Henry Lazarus, Bishop in Vellore Diocese and Moderator's Commissary in Nandyal Diocese. Over 200 delegates participated, including local delegates from Nandyal Diocese and Rayalaseema Diocese. The morning devotions were led by the delegates. Our Bishop led us in Bible Study on Ezekiel 2 verses 1-6. Dr. Wilson gave three lectures on Christianity and our responsibility in the present society. Group discussions were arranged in which the delegates participated. Miss Williamson spoke on Counselling and gave a demonstration of some important aspects of it. Mr. Jason spoke on youth work and the Rev. J. G. Marsden stressed the financial position of our churches and how to work towards self-support. Every evening games and entertainment were arranged where the young people exhibited their talents. The valedictory service took place in the Holy Cross Cathedral. Mr. Marsden gave a very good message. The pledge was made and then a vote of thanks was given by Rev. G. T. Abraham, convener of the Diocesan Youth Committee. The conference ended with prayer and benediction. Mrs. Ann Marsden, the treasurer, and convener and the young people worked hard to make the convention a success.

B. JASON DEVARAJ,  
Youth Worker,  
Rayalaseema Diocese.

## DORNAKAL

On 29th June 1977 (St. Peter's day) at Karimnagar 8 Deacons and 5 Presbyters were ordained by the Rt. Rev. P. Solomon, the Bishop of the Diocese. On 28th the Rt. Rev. L. V. Azariah, Bishop in Rayalaseema conducted retreat for the ordinands and preached at the Ordination Service. The candidates were presented by the Rev. K. E. Swamidas, Convener, Ministerial Committee. About 30 clergy from several parts of the diocese attended. A special feature is the ordination of two Lambadies (a tribal people) as Deacons after Theological Training. They are Deacon Lakavath Yesurathnam and Deacon Bhukya Lalsingh Lazarus. Rev. (Miss) Dorothy Hill who was ordained Deacon in 1976 had taken interest to send them for theological training and so she came to attend their ordination.

A. BUNYAN.

### REFRESHER COURSE FOR CORRESPONDENTS, WARDENS AND MATRONS OF HOSTELS IN THE TELUGU REGION

The Refresher Course for Correspondents, Wardens and Matrons of hostels in the Telugu region—C. S. Rayalaseema Diocese, C.S.I. Nandyal Diocese, A.E.L.C., S.T.B.C. and S.A.L.C.—was successfully organised in Cuddapah from 6th to 10th June 1977. Altogether 32 delegates participated in the course.

Inaugurating the course the Rt. Rev. L. V. Azariah, Bishop of Rayalaseema Diocese, stressed the importance of the physical, social, spiritual and emotional aspects of Child Care (total needs of the person). He invited the response of the people for the call of God for this responsible work.

Minutes on records and files in the hostels, leadership programme, behavioural problems and counselling, nutrition and balanced diet, vocational guidance and religious programmes were some of the topics discussed at the conference.

A visit to St. Anonty's Industrial Institute was arranged to see and discuss with its officials about the administration and conditions of the institute, and the nature of the life of the students residing in the hostel attached to the institute. This helped us to understand the conditions of other hostels, especially here, which give training and schooling for students with a vocational centred aim. During the course everyday devotions, games, singsong and entertainments were arranged for spiritual and social fellowship and to improve the talents which can be used for the glory of God through teaching those activities to the children in the hostels.

In the valedictory function, certificates were presented to all the participants by Mrs. Krupa Azariah, wife of the Bishop. The participants shared their experiences and advantages they enjoyed by attending the course. The course came to an end with a happy 'dance out' programme led by Mr. Vinaya Sagar, with a song which means; 'We have enjoyed the refresher course. We have enjoyed together. Thanks to you all and thanks to God'.

D. SAMUEL FRANCIS.



# NOTICES

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## WORLD SUNDAY SCHOOL DAY PROGRAMME

The above day falls on 6th November this year. CEEFI has prepared a programme with a drama on the life of Amy Carmichael, a devoted friend who had founded the Dohnavur Fellowship.

The drama and the programme will be available in all regional languages from our Regional Secretaries. One copy of the same will be sent free on request to me.

You are requested to send your donations to the undersigned or to your Regional Secretary or to the Treasurer, Dohnavur Fellowship, Dohnavur, Tirunelveli Dist., Tamil Nadu 627 102. Encouraging reports be sent to us after celebration of the day.

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## Letter to the Editor

### INDIAN CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE ACT

Sir,

Through your magazine, may I appeal to all the church authorities to take up the question of amending the Indian Christian Marriage Act, which has been enacted a century ago. It is now out of date and very unsuitable to meet the complicated problem of human relationship in today's situation in so far the Christians are concerned today. There should be united effort on behalf of all churches in India—the Roman Catholics and the Protestants to move the Parliament to change this old and out of date act. It is necessary that the Churches should unitedly face this problem, failing which the Christians should have the freedom and liberty to take shelter under the Indian Marriage Act, 1955.

I hope that the Church of South India will give a prominent lead in this matter.

RT. REV. D. C. GORAI.  
Bishop of Barrackpore.

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